TIMES UNION

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# Commentary: All-electric mandate will deepen New York's housing crisis

**The state must phase in electrification responsibly so infrastructure and supply chains can catch up.**

The numbers are staggering: Every $1,000 increase in the price of a home pushes nearly 7,000 New York families out of homeownership.

Yet despite such clear data on the housing crisis, the state is pushing forward with a sweeping all-electric mandate for new construction that will go into effect next year. The mandate risks exacerbating this crisis, adding thousands of dollars to building costs, delaying projects and straining our already-overburdened power grid.

How we navigate the new mandate comes with real consequences. If developers and builders find it too costly, slow or uncertain to operate in New York, they will invest in other states.

The costs to electrify a home — including installing heat pumps and upgrading electrical service — can easily exceed $25,000 per unit, before even factoring in higher monthly energy bills for homeowners.

Cost is half the problem. The other is the electric grid itself. The New York Independent System Operator has warned of a power shortfall large enough to put us at risk of power outages. Large-scale upstate developments could also strain capacity if renewable generation and transmission projects fall behind schedule, which recent history suggests is likely.

Builders are already grappling with severe transformer shortages, thousands of dollars in power capacity upgrade costs, and prolonged utility delays. The National Infrastructure Advisory Council reports that a new transformer ordered today could take up to three years to arrive, compared to just four to six weeks five years ago. Without a functional grid and resilient supply chain, an all-electric mandate will not just slow housing production; it could stop projects altogether. In today’s market, even an 18-month delay for electric infrastructure upgrades can be a project killer.

New York needs a balanced path forward. The state must phase in electrification responsibly so infrastructure and supply chains can catch up.

At the same time, we must continue to maintain diverse energy options to serve as a bridge to long-term reliability and affordability. This will help mitigate the risks and disruptions caused by natural disasters or other emergencies that could immobilize a single source of energy delivery.

Lawmakers must also continue to incentivize energy efficiency, weatherization and oil-to-gas conversions, while rejecting policy that is incompatible with those goals.That's why legislation approved in June that proposes eliminating the “100-foot rule” is so shortsighted and regressive.

Eliminating the rule — which requires natural gas companies to cover the cost of hooking gas up to a new customer’s building — would only exacerbate affordability concerns, saddling individual homeowners looking to use natural gas with thousands of dollars in connection costs.

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